



What is Professionalism in Medicine?

Dr. Noreen Mirza
Dept. of Medical Education
College of Medicine
PNU



As noted by Sir William Osler, it takes time, effort, and dedication to live according to an ideal: this is perhaps the single most important obligation medical students have to both society and to the profession.

The Emergence of Professionalism

- The term “professionalism” encompasses a reaffirmation of the values and behaviours of physicians.
- The concept of professionalism first emerged in the early 1990's in the United States as a response to the many challenges facing the health care system.

Why Professionalism

- The term “professionalism” arose out of the desire to reaffirm humanistic qualities, such as compassion and altruism, back into the medical world.
- As such, professionalism developed out of the necessity to reinforce sound ethical principles within the medical community.

Sir William Osler (1849-1919)

- William Osler, one of Canada's most renowned physicians, is known for his many contributions to medical education. Osler studied medicine at McGill University and graduated at the top of his class in 1872
- During his sixteen years at Johns Hopkins, William Osler revolutionized the teaching of medicine in medical schools across both the US and Canada.
- In 1892, Osler published "The Principles and Practice of Medicine: Designed for the Use of Practitioners and Students of Medicine."
- This text, which stressed the significance of practical training during medical school, greatly influenced medicine for years to come

Attributes

Physician

Healer

Professional

Healer

Caring/ compassion
Insight
Openness
Respect for the
healing function
Respect patient
dignity/
autonomy
Presence/ Accompany

Competence
Commitment
Confidentiality
Altruism
Trustworthy
Integrity / Honesty
codes of ethics
Morality / Ethical
Behavior
Responsibility to
profession

Autonomy
Self-regulation
associations
institutions
Responsibility
to society
Team work

Professional



Based on the Literature

MEDICAL PROFESSIONALISM

- **Definitions**
 - **Evolution**
 - **Concerns**
 - **Revitalization**
 - **Conclusions**

DEFINITIONS

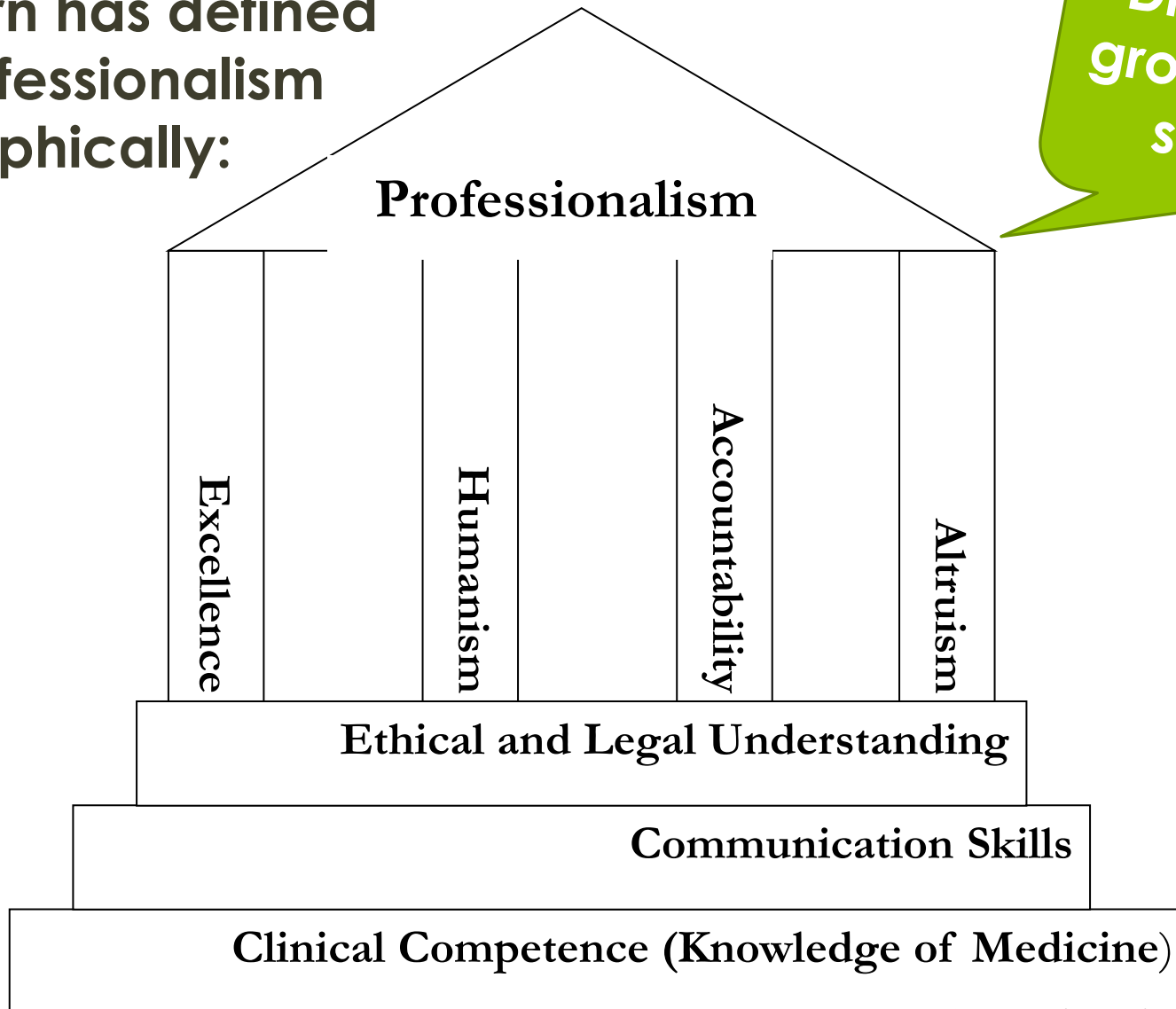
Expectations at the level of undergraduate medical education are outlined below:

- Respect for professors, and peers
- Respect for guest speakers and visiting patients
- Respect for cadavers and anatomical specimens in the anatomy lab
- Respect for the institution you are a part of
- Respect for patients and their families at clinical encounters
- Respect for patient confidentiality
- Respect for all members of the health care team
- Respect for administrative and support staff
- Respect for the core values of professionalism

Expectations at the level of undergraduate medical education Cont.

- Honesty and integrity
- Altruism
- Respect
- Responsibility and accountability
- Compassion and empathy
- Dedication and self-improvement

- From the US, David Stern has defined professionalism graphically:



Discuss in
groups and
share

Arnold and Stern, 2006

Medicine is considered to be the classic example of a profession.

- The term Professionalism embraces a set of **attitudes, skills and behaviours, also values** which are expected from those to whom **society** has extended the privilege of being considered a Professional.

How professionalism can be taught?

All definitions of Professionalism include 3 elements:

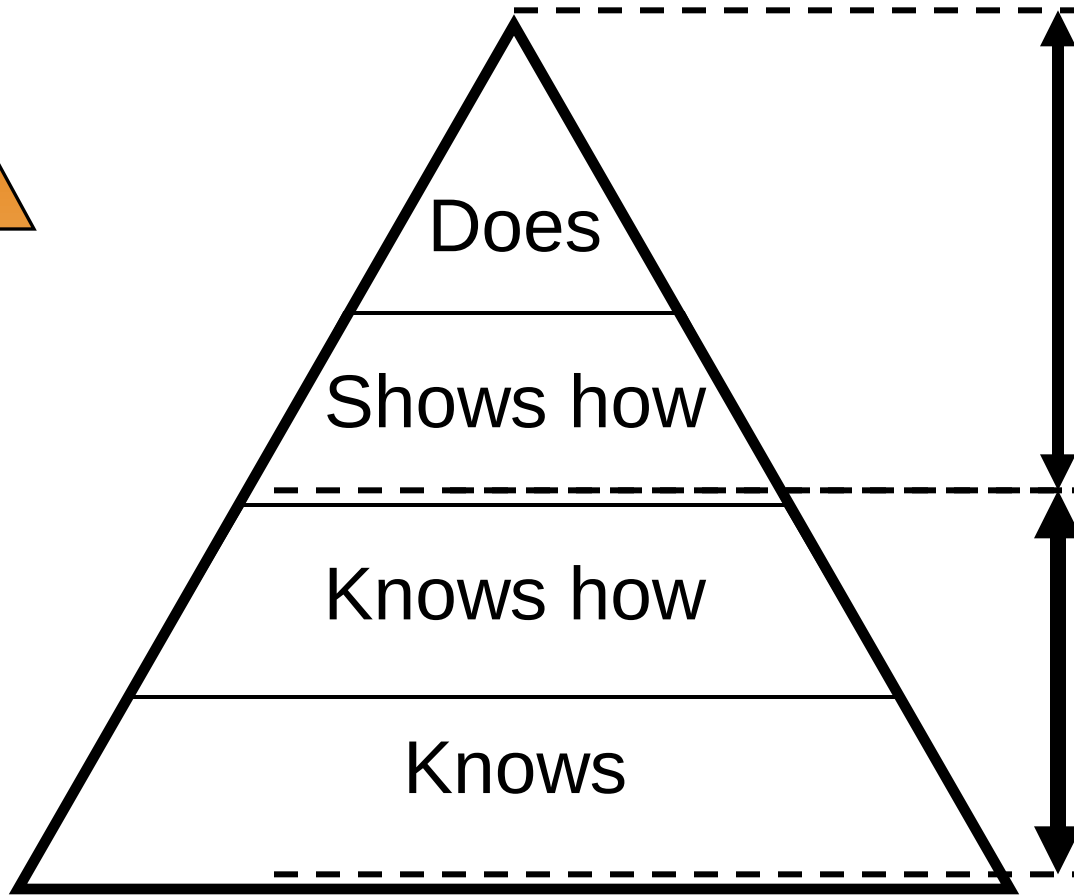
- a physician has mastered a body of knowledge and skills, and this knowledge and training is to be used in **the service of others,**
- the expectation that **physicians will uphold the highest standards of ethical and professional behaviour** in all their actions and activities,
- the practice of medicine involves a compact of **trust between patient and doctor** – a social (moral) contract. This contract with society allows us to regulate ourselves, **both personally and professionally.**

The Core Values of Professionalism include

- Honesty and Integrity
- Altruism
- Respect
- Responsibility and Accountability
- Compassion and Empathy
- Dedication and Self-improvement

One of our central tasks at the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Medicine is to instill and evaluate the values of medical professionalism in our students and to facilitate the development of their professional identity in preparing them for their future role as physicians caring for people who are ill.

How can professionalism be Assessed?



Performance
or hands on
assessment
Portfolios

Written,
Oral or
Computer
based
assessment

Miller's Triangle

Evaluation aspect

- Minor lapses,
- Major lapses and
- “Critical events”

Subject to judgment and hence a review process is in place.

Minor lapses

- Minor lapses are errors but have minimal consequences. Often there is no awareness of the unprofessional act or it occurs after the fact. There may often be mitigating circumstances.
- Examples:
 1. Student falls asleep on a stretcher in the hall of the hospital.
 2. Student does not meet deadline for paper due to family illness but does not notify anyone.

Major lapses

- Major lapses are errors but have serious consequences. Often there is awareness of the unprofessional act . Usually, there are no mitigating circumstances.
- Examples:
 1. Student refuses to return phone calls and e-mails from a professor.
 2. Student does not answer his pager from the emergency room
 3. Student rushes in to see a patient with “interesting” findings despite being told to not do so.

Critical events

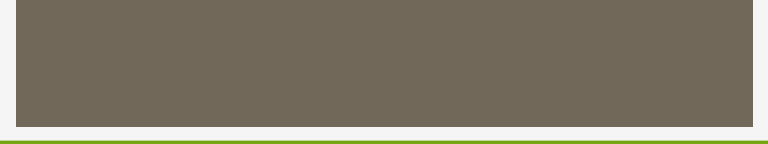
- Critical events are serious events that will require immediate action by the supervisor. It is a clear violation of the code of conduct.
- Examples:
 1. Student being dishonest either by lying or misrepresenting himself/herself.
 2. Student hitting a patient.
 3. Student being sexually inappropriate with a patient or fellow member of the health care team.

In 2005, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) published the second version of 'The CanMEDS 2005 Physician Competency Framework.

This framework offers the following definition of a professional:

- "As *professionals*, physicians are committed to the health and well-being of individuals and society through ethical practice, profession-led regulation, and high personal standards of behaviour"

To view the 2005 CanMEDS Physician Competency Framework published by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), go to <http://www.royalcollege.ca/portal/page/portal/rc/canmeds/framework>



Strive to be a Professional

...

**So that you can be a
doctor tomorrow !!!**